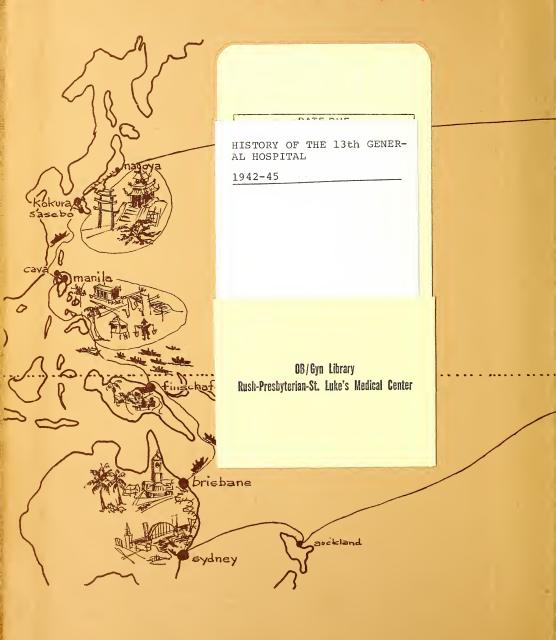


# HISTORY OF THE 13th GENERAL HOSPITAL

# OBIGYN







# The 13th GENERAL HOSPITAL in WORLD WAR II



1942

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1945



#### In Memoriam

LET US PAUSE IN SILENT PRAYER AS WE RECALL THOSE OF OUR COMRADES WHO HAVE ANSWERED THE FINAL ROLL CALL.

Joseph M. Aspel

John H. Bodfish

Nelle Crout

Walter J. Czaja

Thomas R. Edwards

Clarence D. Haslam

Richard Holic

Johnnie P. Parker

Alfred William Schnoor

Eugene Stinetorf



TO ALL THE MEN AND WOMEN
WHO ASSISTED IN THE WORK OF
THE 13th GENERAL HOSPITAL THIS
HISTORY IS GRATEFULLY
DEDICATED



# Foreward

This account of the 13th General Hospital, a unit of the great armed forces of the United States during World War II, was brought about not by any one individual but by a combination of many. In determining the manner of telling the story those intrusted with that decision concluded that the work should as far as possible avoid mention of individuals both in script and pictures. Among the more than sixteen hundred men and women who came into the family of the 13th and thereafter moved to other units or remained until discharge, there was a great wealth of personalities. To dwell upon particular persons might be an injustice to others, whether real or fancied, and while criticism cannot be totally eliminated, it should be minimized by the policy adopted.

Shortly after their return from Japan and their discharge from service in this country, about twenty-five of the men attended the Annual Reunion of Base Hospital 13, a hospital unit which was recruited at Presbyterian Hospital in Chicago and which saw service in World War I. At this affair it was decided to form an alumni group of the 13th General Hospital so that associations and friendships made during the strain and stress of war might not languish and die during peace. The 13th General Hospital Association was formed and an unselfish group devoted much of their time and efforts to this organization. Three splendid dinner-dance reunions have been conducted in 1946, 1947, and 1948. It is hoped that the reunions will continue long into the future as successfully as they have during the first few years.

The active members of the 13th General Hospital Association early conceived the idea of a permanent record of the hospital group. In the first communications sent to the former 13th personnel from the alumni group a request was made for pictures and anecdotes. The response to this request was negligible and most of the pictures sent to the secretary were of individuals and could not be used in view of the policy adopted. The plan however did not perish.

While in service, Dr. Joseph Bennett, Robert Volk, Michael Dolark, and James Hammond helped to register and preserve a record of facts and dates concerning the unit. From this voluminous documentation of statistics a committee composed of Alvin J. Bielak, Edwin Certel, Harry F. Layson, and Michael Dolark plucked the important and interesting details. This group also succeeded in obtaining a number of appropriate pictures. The work was then turned over to Richard T. Tobin, who did the final editing.

While it is impossible to name all those who as sisted in the production of this history by giving counsel or suggestions, and by supplying photographs, it is appropriate that the officers of the 13th General Hospital Association should be listed for without the encouragement, interest, and assistance of that organization, it is more than probable that this small treasure of hallowed memories might never have come into existence.

## OFFICERS OF 13th GENERAL HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

1945 - 1946

	President Richard T. Tobin Vice-President Walter P. Horvat Secretary Maybelle Hawkins Assistant Secretary James Hammond Treasurer. Robert J. Flaskamp
1946 - 1947	
	President Robert J. Flaskamp First Vice-President Fred K. Stewart Second Vice-President Ellen McCumber Secretary Frances Zoller Assistant Secretary Alvin J. Bielak Treasurer Joseph L. Essery
	1947 - 1948
	President Fred K. Stewart First Vice-President Ellen McCumber High Second Vice-President Alvin J. Bielak Secretary Velma Bowman Assistant Secretary Dr. Leslie Gaylin Treasurer Joseph L. Essery
	1948 - 1949
	President

Second Vice-President ...... Velma Bowman

Secretary . . . . . . Dr. Leslie Gavlin

Assistant Secretary . . . . . Dr. H. Ivan Sippy

Treasurer . . . . Leon Benkoff



#### BIRTH OF THE

### 13th General Hospital

December 7, 1941—a dread whisper of the bombing of Pearl Harbor soon grew into a furious roar. WAR followed with rapid mobilization and integration of all industrial and military forces. In the plan of things Presbyterian Hospital of Chicago was destined to contribute to the military phase of this effort a competent general hospital, for during World War I a unit organized at the hospital established an enviable record as Base Hospital 13, ministering to the sick and wounded at Limoges, France, to the termination of that conflict.

With such tradition established at the Chicago Hospital a request came from Washington, D. C., for an organization to serve in World War II, and with some of the veterans of the Base Hospital serving as a nucleus, a new hospital unit began to take form. As this new born group was scheduled to serve overseas and therefore bear a number rather than a name, it became fitting to follow the brilliant heritage of the 13th Base and accordingly the name 13th GENERAL HOSPITAL was attached to the already growing infant.

Recruiting machinery was set up at offices in Presbyterian Hospital and soon the full complement of doctors, dentists, and nurses was filled. Instead of gleefully administering shots to others these specialists soon found themselves on the receiving end of the hypodermic needles, and many were hastily sent into advance training at specialist schools and camps throughout the country.

A more difficult job was the selection of 350 enlisted men to fill the positions of medical, surgical, laboratory, and X-Ray technicians, office personnel, plumbers, carpenters, and steamfitters with no regard for union pay rates, barbers, chiropodists, pharmacists, optometrists, cooks, tailor, the inevitable yardbirds, and others required in the Table of Organization. Wide-eyed, serious young men appeared at the hospital recruiting office with splendid backgrounds and qualifications slightly exaggerated, and upon acceptance into the unit they departed with radiant belief and hopeful certainty that they would not be inducted as ordinary soldiers but as men of many stripes. The quota being filled by October, 1942, enlistments closed.

Under the direction of AMC officers and enlistees with prior military experience, the hopefuls voluntarily congregated several evenings each week on the grounds near Presbyterian Hospital and with cooling weather they assembled in the fieldhouse of the University of Chicago for practice in close order drill and for lectures on military technique until December when letters from the War Department advised all to report to the army receiving centers nearest their homes. The majority being from the Chicago area, they had by December 18, 1942, given up their freedom of movement and speech for the gruff orders of the soldiers at the Reception Center of Camp Grant, near Rockford, Illinois, Here nothing of moment occurred other than routine physical examinations, tetanus and typhoid innoculations administered viciously and simultaneously by evil appearing technicians between whom each one had to pass and get stabbed in both arms, carefully fitted clothing tossed from shelves by the supply boys after a swift visual measuring, the first torturing walk under the Herculean burden of loaded barracks bags, a few brisk drills in the zero cold, the baptism of long periods of waiting to fall out on the double quick only to be ordered back to wait some more, the introduction to army chow with long waiting lines. the technique of policing the area, and the memorable first night when the latrines of two barracks echoed all through the hours to the wailing and vomiting of some fifty 13th'rs whose stomachs were in a state of turmoil—oh, but not from the first GI food according to the official investigation which followed. A conclusion that the general internal disturbances might possibly have been caused by some cool ice cream the boys had consumed before getting to camp seemed sufficient to close the matter.

After two or three days the neophyte soldiers had grown to love the new surroundings so much that one hundred per cent of them cheerfully accepted the offer of a week end pass and they headed for home in their oddly fitting military apparel. But the lure of garrison life being too strong to resist, all the men were back in camp Sunday night after a full fledged battle to get aboard the few trains at the rail depot. And then on December 22nd the first order for unit movement was sounded. Barracks bags were packed and loaded on creaking shoulders, and the boys like Volga boatmen groaned along over crunching snow on the trek to a waiting train, there to sit some three hours before the engine coughed and jerked out of Grant headed for a new destination.

#### COMMANDING OFFICER



COL. LYLE S. POWELL

Assumed Command at Camp Robinson

#### CAMP ROBINSON

After a devious thirty-six hour itinerary the expectant passengers were at last ejected into a new world of wonderment with white helmeted militia in the gloom of the evening directing the visitors into trucks for a bumpy ride to a section of what proved to be Camp Joseph T. Robinson, a short distance from the City of Little Rock, Arkansas. "Take up thy bed and walk" became the first reality here as the boys lined up at a supply depot and were issued a metal cot, mattress, and bed clothing to lug back to their newly found homes—hutments—a wooden form of pyramidal tent holding six closely fitting cots for six homesick occupants. The directing troops under the white helmets turned out to be members of the 214th General Hospital, who were to be the training cadre for the 13th.

duty before eight. Then came training by the numbers—salute—attention—at ease—forward march—to the rear march—left face—right face—column right—about face—company attention—battalion pass in review (No, No! Do that over again)—guard duty—general and special orders—K.P.—ascertaining what General Orders the Officer of the Day had memorized and was asking of the members of the guard. Astonished veterans viewed with amazement Pfc's of the cadre teaching sergeants and corporals simple military rudiments. But gradually things took shape and the unit began to function like a well trained force.

Being a hospital group the outdoor drilling was eased by a medical and first aid lecture series together with an exhibition of training films. Physi-



Camp Robinson Entrance

The following days were a new awakening. The lusty sounds of the bugler at 5:30 A. M. meant dressing in nothing flat, falling out on the road a few blocks away for roll call, exercises by the numbers, announcements, ablutions, breakfast, bed making (army style), sweeping and scrubbing the hutments after borrowing someone's scrub pail and mop, quietly and unnoticed, to replace the combination which had been surrepticiously borrowed from you in the dark of the night, policing the hutment area, getting fitted in the proper type of clothing for the particular functions of the moment, and ready for

ology, tourniquets, wounds, fractures, bandages, poison gases and the respective treatments for the different types, the method of admitting patients to an army hospital, management of a hospital ward, and other equally interesting subjects were part of the agenda. Soon everyone was a pseudo physician at ease with words like compound comminuted fracture, contused or incised wounds, zygoma, epidermis, spica bandages, protargol, diaphoretics, capillaries.

Class rooms were often warm and close, and soldiers were often tired from an evening of fun in Little Rock. The combination resulted in many an



Hutments with Mess Hall in Distance

attentive student drowsing into a deep slumber only to be awakened suddenly by the reverberating clang of his steel helmet as it bounced on the wooden floor after slipping from a relaxing grip; other sleepers would awake with a yell as they dreamed of walking on hot ploughshares only to find the charred embers of match sticks protruding from their shoes, mute but convincing evidence that the familiar hotfoot had been administered by a "buddy." Since it was all in fun they took it graciously and the teaching officers joined in the merriment—most of the time.

There was the usual griping about everything, which was considered a healthful condition. Busses left camp every fifteen minutes for Little Rock and it was not difficult to get there since a liberal policy prevailed on passes. And when passes were forbidden some of the boys took a tortuous alpine path down a steep hill to the back of camp risking their personal safety and military security to pay a visit to the "Honky Tonk" for a social drink, while those who chose to live within the rules could attend movies, frequent the day room, the PX, Service Club, or Field House.

Approximately nine weeks after arrival, happy Gi's wrote home that basic training was finished. They were now full-fledged medical soldiers. This wave of happiness was short lived as a contingent of medical officers and 105 nurses arrived to complete the roster of the 13th G. H., and an order descended from headquarters to begin another basic training period. This would prove to be the third for the boys of the 214th, which had been deactivated on January 15, 1943, and most of its personnel transferred to the 13th. As this was the army and all the fellows good sports, everyone griped but nobody resigned.

And so there was more tent pitching by the numbers with Mister  $5 \times 5$  calling out the duties of the number 1 and 4, 2 and 5, and 3 and 6 men; there



Typical Chapel at Robinson

were more bed displays, inspections, obstacle courses, long marches to an imaginary battlefield with realistic charges out of woodlands and across open fields, up hills, into valleys, across streams, with message centers and company field headquarters like the real thing; simulated wounded were carried by litter to battalion aid stations, then to clearing stations for ambulance transport to evacuation hospitals, and finally to the general hospital in the rear echelon. Sometimes the going was rough on the long marches, especially for the scouts, and it was for everybody when the rugged climb up coronary hill was encountered on the double at the end of the day. Doctors all became military strategists as they directed platoons and companies. However, everyone seemed to survive—even those who theatrically died in the aid stations or evacuation hospitals from the simulated wounds received in the mock combat.

Many will vividly recall the episode of the "lost battalion", which started out an hour in advance of the regular force to intercept it at a designated point according to plan, but didn't because of a mistake on the compass or the taking of a wrong azimuth, with the result that long after the main force had safely returned, a bedraggled company of men returned to camp around the midnight hour. It is reported that the Major in charge after realizing that his command was lost stood in the midst of them and bellowed

out "Where the hell are we?"

Nurses having been toughened by the training marched along on the sixteen mile hikes in stride with the men and at the signal of air attack dispersed and sought cover from the aerial bombs dropped in the form of paper bags of flour from the attacking planes overhead. Behind the lines of the planned battlefield these nurses set up and administered a field hospital where they received the casualties whose EMT tags bore notations: chest wound; perforated leg wound and fracture; mustard gas; burns on arms and legs; eye abrasion. One of the girls swore that even such rugged duty was mild compared to the shock she received upon encountering a venomous snake reposing in her foot locker even though the emergency squad called out to battle the intruder found it to be a harmless, artificial copy planted there by a person or persons unknown.

One of the proud extra curricular accomplishments of basic was the formation of a splendid band to perform magnificently for the parades on the field, which became as regular as the old Saturday Night Bath of a few generations back. Visiting dignitaries stood



Row of Hutments

in the reviewing stand as Colonel Powell over a portable loud speaker issued the order "Captain Klein, sound off," and as the band began the strains of a Sousa march, the officers, nurses, and men passed smartly before the reviewing stand with eyes right. One such day as the nurses measured their cadence before the stand, an old regular army officer, unaccustomed to marching nurses, blurted out that he couldn't say they looked the best but they sure smelled the best.

Toward the end of the last basic, everyone received a seven-day furlough after which training was given in the Station Hospital of Camp Robinson where medical officers performed their medical and surgical work, the nurses their nursing duties according to the army method, and the men obtained practical experience as orderlies, technicians, and clerks.

By mid-April basic training had again been completed and the unit looked forward to some action. It was not long in coming. For several weeks orders were given to fall out with bags packed ready for shipment only to bring them back, unpack, and hang the clothing in required order; no telephone calls; no outgoing letters; everything was secret. Finally one day it was no longer practice and everyone was assigned a place on two waiting trains which chugged out of Camp Robinson for points unknown, with everyone in merry mood on leaving and many of the boys singing the hospital theme song composed by two of the enlisted men and sung to the tune of "Solomon Levi":

Stanza 1.

We're the 13th General Medics
And we'd rather heal than fight,
We push the pans and roll the pills
Throughtout the day and night.
We've tried to flirt with nurses
When underneath the stars,
But found it doesn't work so well

Because we have no bars.

Chorus

Hey, for the Medics,
That's the place to be,
Ho, for the Medics,
That's the place for me.
Hi, for the Medics,
They save the infantry,
The Medicals, The Medicals,
That's for you and me.

Stanza 2.

We bandage heads, and splint the legs,
And carry litters, too.
With enemas and littie ducks
We know just what to do.
The work is really very hard
It nearly breaks our backs,

And if we had our way, boys, We'd go and join the WAACS.

Chorus Stanza 3.

There are cases by the hundreds,
That we've been trained to meet.
Everything from Chicken Pox
To curing ailing feet.
When instruments are lacking
We sometimes use a fork
But the thing that bothers us the most
Is helping out the stork.

Chorus

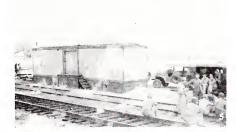
#### THE GOLDEN STATE

Over the vast plains of the southwest the train caravam steadily increased the mileage away from Arkansas and edged on into the foothills and then the mountains of the far west. Regular stops were made for exercises outside the cars. The scenes gradually changed to desert, and for the first time many eyes beheld cactus, yucca, and other arid plants, with occasional long rows of grape vines or groves of orange, lemon, and grapefruit in irrigated spots. CALIFORNIA—the 13th General Hospital had entered the proud boundaries of the Golden State.

Along in the desert bleakness the trains came to a stop and in a rutted, one way, sand road fringed with sage brush, there loomed a convoy of army trucks which quickly loaded and taxied the 13th through orange scented air to a paved highway and finally a destination which appeared to be in the midst of nowhere—a valley sprouting shoulder high grass surrounded by the gentle sloping San Jose hills.

This was Spadra on May 7, 1943, a place destined to be home for four months of life. Noses were counted. An advance group had supplies on hand and soon everyone was tugging at tent poles, pounding stakes at improper angles, and tying guy ropes, as pyramidal tents sprang up in planned rows. Assignments of men to the tents were made, changed, re-made, and re-changed without even an excusing smile. Some tenants moved as many as ten times that evening before settling down to temporary rest.

Six cots were dumped in front of each tent after which each prospective occupant of a cot was furnished a sack resembling a long pillow case and directed to a stack of bales of straw. Here for the first time the men became mattress makers, stuffing gobs of straw into the long bags. So eagerly was the straw accepted that those toward the end of the line found none left. Soon an order went the rounds that everyone must return his custom-made mattress to



Spadra Railroad Depot



Tent Street



Tent City



Camping-Out at Spadra



GI Vitamins

the straw pile and disgorge one fourth of the contents; later dire threats were sounded for the selfish who sought to retain the pot bellied accomplishments of their handiwork. A water supply was furnished from two 3/4-inch stand pipes blocks away. Yes, a line formed there,too.

The days ahead were busy ones with striking tents and re-pitching them so that lines were straight or in trying to make the tents resemble the pictures of tents in the regulations book; ground was ditched; grass cut down with scythes; swamps drained; fields cleared; and within a short time tent city took on the appearance of a regular camp with orderly rows of tents fronting on company streets, some weak electricity produced by a gasoline powered generator, a shower room in which two shower heads trickled cold water onto the shivering flesh of a few of the brave, willing for the sake of cleanliness to endure such mild torture. Steel helmets which had served as seats or head coverings were now found to have more diversified uses as wash basins for shaving or tubs for sponge baths. Water was either cold or colder, and razors squeaked across staunch beards.



Spadra—PX and Showers in foreground shack; Tent Living Quarters in center;
Rising Hospital Wards in background



13th G. H. Float in Pomona July 4th Parade



Barracks at Spadra

As night descended the camp desert air penetrated beneath muscle and fat, and to try to keep moderately warm, woolen underwear was put to service, OD's were worn to bed, overcoat and all, beneath the full standard issue of three blankets. But the lay cold still crept into beds insidiously and heads were tucked beneath covers. Not until the middle of morning did the outside air moderate and then the burning desert sun beat down mercilessly while sweat rolled down backs and necks.

Latrines were in the open and to cogitate there by evening one had to be an eskimo, while during the heat of the day myriads of air minded flies dive bombed from above and those with naval preference torpedoed from below. Woe was he who was careless enough to develop a slight dysentery. And loud became the cry "Give California back to the Indians."

Nearby buildings which had been the objects of varying rumors turned out to be incomplete hospital wards which were to be operated by the 13th. The 333rd Engineer Corps, who were already in the area, started to work and the medics were set to be content in watching the buildings completed under skilled construction hands. But the buildings were to have more of a personal touch for most of the 13th

men as detail lists were posted on bulletin boards amouncing that the men were assigned to help the engineers finish the job. Shovels and hammers were substituted for medical instruments, concrete was laid, roofs were papered, shelves erected, and the final clean-up jobs completed; medical officers used their scientific training by acting as construction foremen. Medics on duty as first aid men were kept in practice as a steady stream of ambulatory patients flowed into the clinic with bruised fingers from misdirected hammers and misguided saws. Soon the name was on all lips—"The 13th Medical Engineers."

Twenty days after arrival the 13th began its first operation as a field unit when casualties from maneuvers in Desert Training Center of California and Arizona were brought in. Men were assigned specific duties as medical technicians, surgical technicians, dental and laboratory technicians, pharmacists, drivers, typists, clerks, litter bearers, guards. Nurses responded to their assignments in the wards. Medical officers took up their practices of diagnosis and prescribing, cutting and sewing together. The 13th was functioning on its own as an independent unit. Facilities were limited but improvisations were soon learned.



Convoy of Patients awaiting train at Spadra Rail Terminal



Home Sweet Home in a Barracks

Patients were brought by ambulance direct from station and evacuation hospitals as far away as Yuma, Arizona, Needles and Indio, California, while some were flown by plane to nearby air fields and wheeled from there to the Receiving and Evacuation office from which they walked or were carried to designated wards. After recovery they were sent to the Replacement Depot at Pomona or San Bernardino, or taken by train for further observation and treatment to permanent general hospitals within the continental United States, such as Bruns at Santa Fe, New Mexico; Bushnell at Brigham City, Utah; or William Beaumont at El Paso, Texas. For all practical purposes the Desert Training Center was regarded as an overseas area, and soon the food took on an overseas atmosphere with paraffin-tasting, non-melting butter, powdered milk, canned meat and vegetables, and powdered eggs.

A compensation for this life was the fact that Pomona was only seven miles distant while Los Life became more comfortable as water heaters were installed in the wash and shower rooms. Transportation inconveniences vanished as direct bus service between the hospital and Pomona was established.

While the men were going through this tent and barracks life, the nurses were housed in permanent buildings on the grounds which had been part of a State Narcotic Hospital.

The hospital of the 13th was built and functioning and a formal dedication took place July 30, 1943. Visitors were invited and escorted through the wards. A grand parade of the officers, nurses, and enlisted men in Sunday best passed the reviewing stand in solid ranks while the band played favorite marches in spirited style. A bronze plaque imbedded in a stone foundation proclaimed the feat of construction of the hospital by the members of the 13th General Hospital and the 333rd Corps of Engineers. The dedication was solemnly proclaimed with the raising



Col. Powell and Officers on Reviewing Stand

Angeles and Hollywood measured thirty miles. A short three mile walk down San Jose road brought one to Valley Highway where busses could be boarded or rides obtained from a generous, friendly public. Covina, El Monte, and other closer towns exhibited patriotic hospitality. Through the good offices of the Hospital Red Cross Workers dances were arranged, Hollywood artists gave performances, and invitations were extended for private operatic renditions at nearby ranches.

Gradually civilization came to the 13th hospital personnel area as wooden barracks were erected for the officers and enlisted men. Orders were issued to build shelving according to army specifications over each bunk but no issue of lumber, nails, or tools was made. The boys had learned to improvise so the 333rd Engineers became a simulated enemy and stealthy raids were made on the general supplies of this enemy. All shelves were constructed.

of the colors and complimentary speeches. This truly was a significant event since the 13th was the first numbered hospital ever to operate as a going unit within the United States.

A part of the combat training to which the rear echelon medics had to be exposed was the infiltration course. No one was excused from this important assignment and one-third of the personnel responded on each of three successive days for the trip to the course at San Bernardino. Each group returned with dread tales of what could be expected by those who were to follow. Dressed in fatigues and carrying full packs, officers, nurses, Red Cross workers, and enlisted men were led into a narrow trench and then directed over the top to work their way to an objective one hundred fifty yards distant. Barbed wire enlanglements covered the course. Real ammunition studded with tracer bullets and continuously fired from machine guns set at the finish line whistled



Hospital Wards



Chapel Murals Painted by Enlisted Man





Nurses in Battle Dress on Spadra Critique

three feet above the ground to become imbedded in a hill to the rear of the trench. If one became panicky and arose it meant death or serious injury. Along this course the men and women wormed their way in stomach crawls under the wire entanglements, and where the barbs were low enough to catch the back packs, it became necessary to wiggle over from stomach to back and push forward with heel power while raising the wire with uplifting hands. Finally with a sigh of relief one came to the end of the lively one hundred fifty yards and while brushing California sand from clothes, mouth, ears, and eyes, it became more satisfying to watch others negotiate the hazards.

As the days and weeks passed many changes took place. Some who had applied for Officers' Candidate School received notice of acceptance; others were sent to the newly formed Army Specialized Training Program. Hospital ship platoons and portable surgical hospital groups were formed from the experienced medics and shipped away. Replacements trickled in and new friends were made. Those departing took with them fond memories of humor and sadness. They could recall the drummer of the band disappearing during a march as he dropped with his big bass drum into an unseen fox hole on the grounds; they could remember the sadness of the camp as word was received of the death of Al Schnoor in an auto accident and the serious injuries received by his companions; they could picture the home-made zoo of native snakes and animals corralled by one of the doctors; they could recall the evening rush to the Pomona Y.M.C.A. where they were generously given towels, the use of fine refreshing showers and the swimming tank; they would also miss the sandwiches and coffee at the Pomona U.S.O. Center; some would remember the lessons in Spanish, typing, mathematics, and other subjects taken three evenings a week at the Pomona Junior College: they would chuckle at the bewilderment of some of the officers who could find only a few score men in camp on a week end when passes were restricted to twenty per cent of the personnel of more than five hundred enlisted men; and most important they would not forget the ministrations which were given to heal the sick and injured by combinations of themselves, the nurses, and the doctors.

The training had been thorough. The officers, nurses, and enlisted men of the 13th had proven themselves under conditions closely parallel to those encountered in a combat area. On peak days as many as 1700 patients were treated. Commendations by the commanding general of the Desert Training Center bore witness to the efficiency and capability of the unit.

September 13th—after many days of rumors, the 34th General Hospital moved into the 13th area, and it became evident that once again the 13th would be on the move. There was the hustle of checking in supplies and packing. More experienced by now, everyone restricted belongings more sharply. Trains were boarded and the outfit headed East for Brigham City, Utah, to receive final training at Bushnell General Hospital.

#### COMMANDING OFFICER



COL. AUGUST W. SPITTLER

Assumed Command at Bushnell General Hospital

#### THE LAND OF THE MORMONS

After several days of travel the destination, Brigham City, Utah, was reached, and as the first sights of the city were unveiled, it appeared to the astonished men and women that here at last they were to be stationed near a town where hospitality and good will would have no equal elsewhere, for streets were gaily decorated, flags waved from standards and stores, windows revealed artistic displays, all this for the auspicious entry of the 13th. The illusion was short-lived as it became known that this was the occasion of the Annual Peach Festival.

The setting up of the unit was by now an old story to the veterans of desert training. Work was almost routine, and efficiency became a matter of course. About half of the nurses tarried but one week after which they were dispatched on detached duty to such places as Fort Ord at Santa Barbara, Calif., Camp Adair, near Corvallis, Oregon, and Camp Abbot in Bend, Oregon, where possibility of mistaken barracks would be less likely. Their barracks at Bushnell happened to be close to those where the male officers were quartered, and one dark evening a certain captain on high wobbled into the nurses' barracks and confidently edged his way to that part of the building where familiar room number 8 was located. There he proceeded to make ready for sleeping only to be jarred suddenly into complete sensibility by a scared feminine scream piercing the stillness of the night air and sending a forlorn, shadowy form scurrying into the open holding on to dangling bits of clothing. After a more careful survey of the neighboring barracks he found the more familiar one where he would not be unwelcome in a room number 8 of his own.

The men settled down quickly in the small, friendly city nestling high among the mountains and beet farms, and in the months ahead they were to look back longingly upon their Utah stay. Red Cross Volunteer Services from neighboring towns sponsored parties, dances, and get-togethers. Wives and sweethearts came to share the last few months with the men to whom they would soon bid an uncertain farewell. Many men were assigned to the welcome duty of accompanying sick and wounded to points in the East where they were allowed extra time to visit their homes. The others were surprised with the granting of an unrequested fifteen day furlough, and they

happily left to enjoy to the full the brief respite prior to Port of Embarkation.

When the unit departed from Spadra, they left behind them one of their own members as a very sick patient, Captain John Bodfish, who had served as Detachment Commander both at Robinson and Spadra. Several of the medical specialists remained to attend him, but Captain Bodfish died just about the time that the rest of the group was settling down at Bushnell.

Meanwhile, in Washington, D. C., the higher authorities had decided to transfer the Commanding Officer, Colonel Lyle S. Powell, to another post. His successor assumed command November 6, 1943, and was greeted by a full dress parade of the members, who stood in silent attention as the new commander, Colonel August W. Spittler, was awarded the Legion of Merit. Col. Spittler, who was stationed at Pearl Harbor during the Jap sneak attack, had distinguished himself as Chief of Surgery at Trippler General Hospital during and after the bombing.

Events moved rapidly. The 13th was nearing its destiny. The doctors, nurses, and enlisted men were assigned to wards where they had the opportunity to serve human casualties from the real battle areas, men badly maimed and wounded, shell shock victims, battle neurotics, types which would soon becommon patients in the echelons across the sea.

A short time before departure a story circulated that a cadre was to be formed from the 13th personnel. Mamy who had looked with resigned dread upon the nearing ocean voyage started pulling favored strings to be assigned to the group which would insure at least a temporary respite in the states. Soon the men were selected, and detachment head-quarters, which had from the days of Camp Robinson been tagged with the sobriquet "Boars' Nest", was more than decimated as most of its occupants boarded trains for Camp Grant and a new tour of duty as a training group.

December 10, 1943, a little more than two years after Pearl Harbor, the hospital unit had completed preparations for the last stateside move, and on that night dark forms filed silently into shaded Pullman cars. The next stop was to be a Port of Embarkation.



13th Medical Soldiers Prepare for Review at Bushnell-Band at left

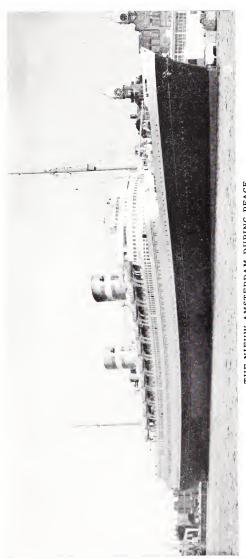
#### GOODBYE AMERICA, GOODBYE

Two days later the trains pulled into Camp Stoneman near Pittsburg, California, in customary reverse with the first to leave being the last to arrive. The nurses on detached service arrived shortly thereafter. A compressed month of physical examinations, security lectures, and policing the area followed. Physical exams were brief, taking several minutes of a bored doctor's time. It was whispered that if the subject was but slightly breathing and could move, his or her record would show for posterity that on this occasion for once here was a perfect physical specimen. However, in fairness to the examiners, let it be said that the unfit had previously been weeded out

Pamphlets were handed out warning against idle talk. The designation of the hospital was submerged in its shipping number, 0522-L, and soldiers looked about cautiously before discussing the merit of the

food they had for breakfast. Chow lines were long. Luckless Gi's finding their names on the K.P. list came back with unbelievable tales of Camp Stoneman style K.P. Company punishment was the penalty if garbage cans contained more than six inches of scrap after two thousand had eaten. K.P.'s were threatened with Courts Martial for eating a slice of bread in the kitchen.

One last pass gave the entire group an opportunity to see civilian America again before shipping out. Things taken for granted so long now assumed new realities. Movies, soda fountains, neon lights—a last look was taken as it was realized that it might be a long time before such wonders would be seen again. In the future, San Francisco tales would gain importance and glamour as reminiscing hospitaleers in New Guinea and the Philippines discussed their last pass in the States.



THE NIEUW AMSTERDAM DURING PEACE





Golden Gate Bridge

#### OCEAN TRAVEL

On January 5, 1944, a long column of the men and women of the 13th weighted down under bags containing the required equipment, supplemented with extras ranging from coat hangers to bourbon smelling liquids, wended their way the three miles from Camp Stoneman to Pittsburg, where they found two river boats on which they were squeezed and compressed into an immovable pack for a twelve hour ride through a cold mist to Frisco. Reaching the embarkation point they filed through a long shed and gradually ascended the gangplank where a worried officer checked the names of those who passed. Into the hold of the Nieuw Amsterdam, a former Dutch luxury liner, the long file was swallowed.

Eight thousand military personnel were to ride this transport. Places had been assigned. Staterooms constructed for two became the nesting places for from six to twelve nurses. However, they had the luxury of towels, sheets, and linen, and running water twice a day, at which times they put to use their desert training by hoarding the water in steel helmets. The male officers had similar luxuries and were guartered six to eighteen, depending on rank, in staterooms similar to those assigned ship K.P.'s. The enlisted personnel were placed in what was formerly the Ritz Carlton Bar. Collapsible metal frames reached from floor to ceiling throughout the vast room. Canvas strips were attached to the frames in four tiers with in-between spaces of twenty-four inches to make up the private bedroom of each GI. The place was slightly cramped and the air stuffy, especially at night when all windows were shut.

The next day, January 6th, the transport shoved off and steamed under the Golden Gate Bridge for its long voyage without armed escort. The speed of the vessel made it unlikely prey for enemy armed craft in any race. Enlisted men of the 13th were questionably honored by being selected as K.P.'s for the other troops aboard, and as the ship plowed steadily across the Pacific they were busy carrying from the ship's hold to the mess hall food for consumption. Salad, meat, potatoes, vegetable, and dessert, constituting a meat, were piled hodge podge into a dish

resembling a soup bowl. Then they reversed the procedure carting the empties from mess hall to the hold. Five settings were held for each meal; two meals a day were served for those whose appetites were not voided by the waves. Officers fared better being served by Dutch waiters at linen covered tables.

Boxing and gambling were the favorite pastimes during the day. News and music were broadcast on the sun deck and main lounge. Upon crossing the Equator, high jinx developed with some heads left glistening after a razor treatment administered by Father Neptune.

Alarms were sounded frequently for boat drills. Nurses had been given kits in which they were to pack those things they thought most necessary to life if a catastrophe should leave them bobbing about in open boats on the waves for an unknown period. A peek into such kits religiously carried to the life boats on each alarm would have revealed such necessaries as bobby pins, candy bars, fish hooks, safety pins, and bras. Water was carefully conserved and issued only in the morning and evening. Despite this if canteens were not full of the precious liquid at the mid-afternoon inspections, the guilty parties would be placed on the punishment list. To be on the safe side one remained thirsty from breakfast to mid-afternoon.

The trip was not entirely uneventful. One night when evening festivities were in full swing on the blacked out ship, the alarm for general quarters was fiashed throughout the craft. This was not practice. The large ship lurched forward, belching forth huge clouds of black smoke. It veered crazily, it creaked and groamed as it zigzagged through the waves like an expert open field runner. The cause was a light spotted in the ocean blackness. Gradually the light was no longer visible and the radar indicated all clear which returned things to normal. Following this episode it is known that at least one 13th soldier deserted the crowded sleeping quarters below deck in favor of the hard boards of the open deck during the remainder of the trip.

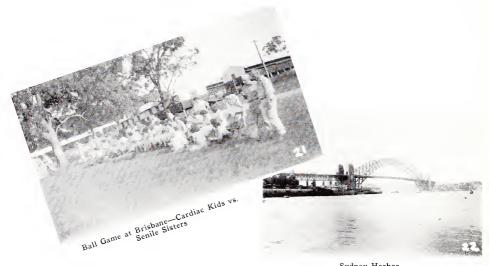
#### DOWN UNDER

Eleven days after the departure of the huge transport from the States the welcome sight of land ignited a silent prayer of appreciation in the hearts of all. Colored dots on the gentle, green, sloping hills became steadily larger as the distance to shore narrowed, and they then burst forth as neat homes surmounted by brilliant red tile roofs. Small ferry boats feverishly raced back and forth in the wide harbor. This was Auckland, New Zealand, the first scheduled stop where a contingent of the troop cargo was discharged from the ship.

first experience of riding in opposite English style, on the left side of the road, to the objective, Herne Bay.

À large hospital center had been erected at Herne Bay and it looked as though this would be the war locale of the 13th. This wishful conclusion gradually wore off as the only work assigned the EM'S was "Police de area", again, again, and again.

Passes were given every fourth day and large contingents rode the trams to Sydney and other neighboring towns. The large city with its many stores



Sydney Harbor

A brisk business consisting of exchange of American cigarettes for New Zealand coins was interrupted only by the departure of the Nieuw Amsterdam for the 13th G. H. destination, Sydney, Australia, which was reached January 22, 1944. The personnel of the 13th filed off the transport into waiting ferry boats which chugged slowly towards the train shed. Here a transfer was made to rickety, antiquated Australian trains which succeeded in getting all to the suburb of Punchbowl, where amother transfer to busses was effected. Hilarity and ribald comments echoed through the conveyances as the Americans had their

afforded a welcome opportunity for shopping, and hasty purchases of woolen goods, yarns, and sheep rugs were soon traveling on their way to homes in the States. The zoo provided sights of the strange Koala Bear and the Wallaby. Pubs were opened a half hour in the forenoon and a half hour in the afternoon. In the near one hundred degree temperature the brief opportunity to sample Aussie beer was a heavenly delight but many wondered whether the brief ascension was worth it as they nursed devilish poundings in their heads as an aftermath of the potent  $12\,\%$  amber fluid.

The faithful followers of horseflesh who managed to get out to the race track were amazed to witness the thorobreds racing around the track in the wrong direction. There was an air of domestic familiarity, however, as the cash turned in at the betting windows followed the usual pattern of failing to bring the multiplied returns anticipated.

Taking full advantage of this possible last contact with civilization, the girls rushed the beauty shops for last permanents, sets, and manicures. After 5:30 P. M. everything in town closed and all activity ceased. Most popular meeting place of the 13th in Sydney was the modern Australian Hotel.

The three weeks at Herne Bay passed quickly. Aussie "stike and aigs" supplemented the less exotic army chow. Heavy olive drab clothes were turned in for light summer clothing, but barracks bags seemed to bulge and weigh as much as before the change. Finally word was spread that the next stop of the 13th would be Brisbane, Queensland. Another ride in the so-called "first class" trains of the Australian rail system was dramatically climaxed in that city by an enthusiastic welcome from the usually stolid Aussies.

The new hospital area was at Holland Park, a suburb of Brisbane, one-half hour by tram from that metropolis. The 42nd General Hospital was operating a hospital here for casualties which were pouring in from New Guinea. Almost immediately the work of their staff was lightened as the doctors, nurses, and enlisted men of the 13th stepped into the healing roles they had learned so well. In addition engineering details were assigned to not unskilled hands

to dig ditches, clean de area, and install plumbing in the hospital wards. Everyone was working at something. Might this be the place?

At night there was a general exodus from Holland Park to Brisbane where relaxation and food could be had cheaply, despite the fact that this was a garrison town, headquarters of the Southwest Pacific Command. MacArthur headquarters were at Lennon's Hotel. Memories of pointed admonitions at Camp Robinson to salute all staff cars (Chevrolets and Dodges) became laughs here as sleek, highly polished Cadillacs whisked staff officers through the streets without the necessity of the soldier pedestrian pumping his arm into a salute motion. Street cars were of the open variety with girls only performing as conductors. Streets were narrow and cramped. For those who had learned from experience not to drink Aussie beer there were Milk Bars at which milk and ice cream could be purchased, and for six pence one could enjoy a dish of ice cream and cherry sauce.

Many places of entertainment had been set up in Brisbane. For officers there were the American Center and Gregory Terrace. There were swanky clubs where admittance was limited only to officers above the rank of Major. For the enlisted men there were Service Men's Centers and U.S.O. Clubs. There were splendid beaches with glistening white sand, and clubs manned by the Red Cross. All such conveniences served to make the members of the 13th satisfied to remain in such a place. But disappointment loomed again as booster shots were administered along with some new ones, such as cholera.



The Maetsuycker

#### COMMANDING OFFICER



COL. HOMER K. NICOLL

Assumed Command at Brisbane

News rapidly spread that Col. Spittler had been transferred and that Lt. Col. Homer K. Nicoll, Executive Officer under both Powell and Spittler, and a Laboratory Officer of Base Hospital 13 during World War I, was to assume command on March 18, 1944. Soon thereafter, March 25th, orders were issued to prepare to move. Newly found Aussie friends had been made but there had to be a parting.

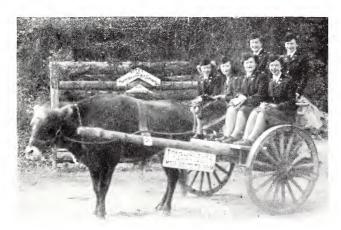
The Maetsuycker, a hospital ship on the white sides and top of which were painted large Red Crosses, took aboard an advance group for a rolling trip across the Coral Sea, reputed to be the roughest body of water in the world. A second similar ship, the Tasman, sailed ten days later with the remainder of the personnel, except the nurses, who remained with the 42nd G. H. for six weeks and then proceeded to Oro Bay where they found what appeared to be the largest rat population on earth. Some still are willing to swear that the rodents were as large as dogs and sometimes took on the size of small ponies.

The girls were housed in open type barracks with canvas walls and roof. Ordinary mosquito bars were the only protection from insect and animal life. Rats squealed and ran around the floor throughout the night. A few of the bolder rodents intent on a choice morsel managed to climb the cots and through the mosquito mesh inflict bites on some of the girls. It

was not with any sense of regret at departing that the nurses after a few weeks of this life smillingly walked the gangplank onto the returned Tasman for the rough Coral Sea voyage.

At Oro Bay the girls had their first glimpse of the native Fuzzies with teeth stained black from chewing Betel nuts, and with contrasting blonde hair bleached with peroxide, an expendible item in the army system. Here also they were privileged to attend the 11th Division Air Review with planes roaring past in regular formations, soldiers marching in high paratroop boots, and paratroopers sailing from transport planes down through the air under their ballooning parachute brakes.

Aside from the bumpy sea, the three passages to Finschhafen, New Guinea, on the Maetsuycker and Tasman were uneventful. At night the ships were fully lighted and contact was maintained with the Japanese Navy, the positions of the ships being signalled to the enemy every twenty-four hours. Each person wore a Red Cross badge on his or her arm. Since the ships were carrying hospital personnel they were accorded the courtesy of safe conduct under the rules of civilized war. The food aboard was the best yet, but many who had bravely weathered the trip across on the larger ship now could develop no semblance of appetite for the choice and tasty dishes offered.



All Travel Was Not by Train, Ship, or Plane



- 21-Sanitary District Crew at Work
- 25-Operation Mud
- 23-Operation Mud
  26-Improved New Guinea Highway
  27-Cocoanuts on ground alongside Enlisted Men's
  Quarters
  28-Buildings in the Making
  29-Building Completed

# IN NEW GUINEA'S TEEMING JUNGLES

The 13th General Hospital was destined to spend most of its army life in the dank, teeming jungles of New Guinea. From some 45 acres of swamp land, hot and overgrown with the lush plant and animal life of the jungle, sprang a hospital with twenty-nine pre-fabricated ward buildings. Long hours and days of heavy labor under depressing conditions were the lot of the 13th in accomplishing the task but accomplish it they did to their everlasting credit. Before even a ward had been completed, patients were being received in temporary ward tents and men had to lay aside their carpentry and cement mixing duties to turn their talents to the better known art of healing.

The first detachment on the Maetsuycker had arrived at night. From the ship in Langemak Bay could be seen many small lights where feverish activity was going on. With the approach of dawn a steady stream of trucks and motor vehicles could be seen plying their way along the sandy shore. This was Finschhafen, destined to be one of the great bases of the South Pacific.



Col. Nicoll stands outside one of Buildings of Officers' Quarters



Enlisted Men's Tent Area No. 1

Ashore the men gaped at the furious activity before them in a wilderness. Their first close look at jungle was had as a convoy of trucks carried them through muddy, rutted roads. At a seemingly impassable point in the jungle wall, they turned into a narrow road where a sign, almost overgrown with tentacles, proclaimed that this was the site of the 54th Evacuation Hospital.

In the spot assigned the 13th,  $\alpha$  hot, damp, enervating heat repelled the GI's as they jumped from the trucks. Two or three buildings, nearly in ruin and partially overgrown with vegetation, were visible. One, an old German mission, had served as field headquarters for the troops who had invaded this Jap stronghold only  $\alpha$  few months before. Hundreds of foxholes pitted the area. An air alert the first night and twenty-four hour guard duty were grim warnings that they were in a genuine battle zone. Only sixty miles away Japs and Yanks were slugging it out in the front lines.



Enlisted Men's Tent Area No. 4

The first few weeks were a kaleidoscope of activities. The area had to be ditched and drained, the foxholes filled, unserviceable buildings razed, the jungle hacked through and thrust back. Three eight-hour shifts kept the work going on round the clock. Knee deep mud and stifling heat became accepted facts. Atabrine was taken with the regularity of eating. Before donning shoes and clothing, close inspections had to be made for detection of dozing snakes and other forms of jungle life. The ever present green mould on clothes became taken for granted.

Other contingents began to arrive. Those who had remained for two days at Milne Bay were flown in. These were closely followed by the members who had left Brisbane on the Tasman, and then came a small group who arrived on a liberty ship. Except

for the nurses the unit was complete.

Gradually out of chaos form came into being. The first installation completed was the nurses' quarters and then the emergency surgery building, first of its type in New Guinea. Nearby, the laboratory, pharmacy, X-Ray, and headquarters were housed in temporary structures.

Meanwhile the men of the 13th had been busy with their own homes, tents pitched in shimmering ponds of oozy mud. Such quarters were gradually transformed by the industrious home makers into tents with elevated floors, built-in shelves, closets, desks and other home-made or borrowed furnishings. Before the departure from New Guinea no well-equipped tent would be without its sunken cold box in which would repose a few bottles of cool beer and delicacies received in welcome packages from home. Lighting systems of candles, gasoline, or mosquito repellant illuminated the tents with a ghastly, flickering light. Stronger light could be had by slushing to the mess hall where 40 watt bulbs cast pale reflections on the oil drum tables. Later every tent was equipped with electric lights.

While the men, like eager beavers, were engaged in their building activities, the nurses arrived from Oro Bay aboard the Tasman. The expected reception committee was not present at the dock to greet or meet them, and here they sat in the open alongside their belongings taking a drenching in the daily downpour. After four hours of this moist welcome to



Nurses' Stockade

The name of 13th Medical Engineers coined at Spadra became a reality on the under side of the earth as the medics wrested hard coral out of pits, then crushed and used it for filling and leveling the area. Despite the sizzling temperature, incessant rain, and quicksand mud, and the much too frequent requisitioning of lumber and other material by adjacent units, buildings began to take shape. Men became more proficient in construction work as practice developed short cuts. Unloading crews hastily removed the contents of the never-ending line of trucks bringing lumber, cement, pre-fabricated units, and other equipment. Electric lights and plumbing were installed.

Engineering units came and went during the construction phase. The old German Mission was the hub of the building activity. Finally the 866th EAB arrived to help erect the ward buildings and complete the job.

Finschhafen, ambulances arrived and the girls poured themselves into the interiors for a ride to the secluded home which had been prepared for themthe stockade. One boundary fronted on the ocean. The other three were land boundaries marked off with barbed wire fences screened with canvas. At night large spot lights threw their powerful beams on the building and around the grounds of this gold fish bowl while guards paced before the entrances to make certain that only those privileged to live within the enclosure could gain admittance. Despite the detailed precautions the planning brains had not anticipated the strange and uncanny movements of the sea as male swimmers were helplessly caught in the ocean currents and surely wafted onto the beach front of the stockade. To overcome such strange forces of the waves a mesh fence was built out into the sea and helpless men no longer found themselves on sands out-of-bounds.

Not content with their building accomplishments on necessary structures, the medical engineers embarked on the construction of a theatre with seats made from cocoanut logs and a stage featuring a screen made of a canvas fly-tent stretched across trusses. This spot became the center of off-duty activity. Movies were shown three times a week. Men and women of the hospital sat through rain, dressed in helmet liners and raincoats, watching Hollywood

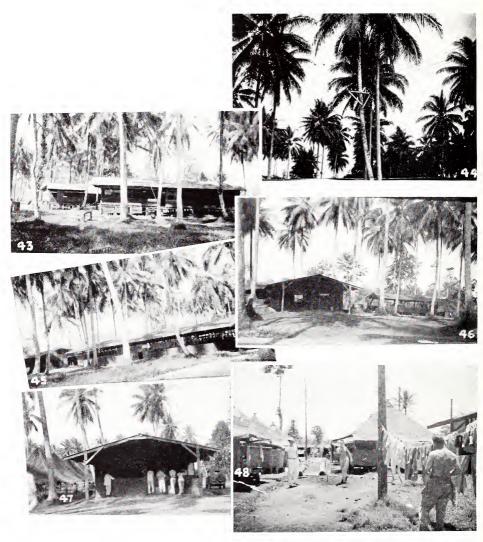
figures darting about on the screen. The first stage show was performed by an Australian Mobile Entertainment Troupe. Other such units, U.S.O. Troubadours, name bands, and famous personalities such as Irving Berlin, Lanny Ross, Candy Jones, Al Schacht, and Judith Anderson did their acis.

Engineer outfits, infantry and tank units — all pitched in to help the 13th build a chapel, an officers' club, a new theatre to replace the one first erected,



38—Emergency Ward Tent 39—Dermatology Ward

37-Registrar and Detachment of Patients Office



- 43—Telephone Exchange and Post Office 44—Communications through the Palms 45—Headquarters 46—Detachment Headquarters, left; E. M. Laundry, right 47—Post Exchange
- 48-Barnyard Golf beside GI Wash



Chapel at Finschhafen

and other buildings. Junglized tents with floors, studs and frames grew up in company streets. Small prefabricated buildings at the end of streets named North Shore Drive, Garvey Boulevard, Brisbane Avenue, housed the first flush toilets seen by the natives. In the Southern area a community arose named "Home Town", complete with miniature golf course, and horse stables. Boats and outriggers were fashioned and launched; swimming piers were extended out into the water. As there were few items to purchase, metal coins lost all value and men engaged in contests of skill to see how far out to sea they could scale the coins along the water surface.

Other pastimes were introduced. A "Tarmers Association" developed with keen competition arising as to which section could grow the best crop of radishes, watermelons, and tomatoes. Various types of handicraft were practiced and Aussie coins were converted into bracelets, necklaces, and watch bands. Cocoanut shells were converted into trays, buttons, and other bric-a-brac. Walks built above the muck connected the buildings in the hospital area. Nurses exerted their influence to obtain white paint, and furniture in the sick wards took on a more aesthetic appearance. Parachutes decorated the Red Cross recreation hall and officers' club.

Taverns and pubs are not even a rarity in New Guinea. They just aren't. Arrival of beer from the States was a slow process. Soldiers who had been taught to improvise looked upon this situation as a challenge to their ingenuity and so there was concocted in the jungle the "Purple Passion Drink". A heat lotion consisting of 90% alcohol, colored a deep hue by the addition of Gentian Violet, was freely distributed for relief of skin reactions to the extreme heat. It soon became known that the amount of Gentian Violet added was harmless to the internal organs. and so the violet colored heat repellant mixed with GI grapefruit juice became a delectable purple cocktail to be leisurely sipped under cocoanut trees while the birds and monkeys of the jungle provided a cabaret background of wierd, discordant sounds. Withdrawals of the heat repellant soon became so enormous that an investigation disclosed the practice of lifting one on good old Uncle Sam. A silent cease and desist order was devised by adding camphor to the solution but the cease and desist was of short duration as a well trained GI employed his knowledge of chemistry by straining the solution through charcoal and thus removing the harsh tasting camphor. The "Purple Passion Drink" was an innocent passing incident in this lonely jungle far from home. No one is known to have suffered any ill effects.

# COMMANDING OFFICER



COL. ALLAN B. RAMSAY

Assumed Command in New Guinea



Receiving Office



Patients Departing

Months had passed since the 13th arrived. The bleak rutted road the hospital personnel had travelled when they arrived at this forlorn spot was now lined with installations from Scarlet Beach to the staging area of the 32nd Division—some 35 miles. Hospital routine was established. Despite all the recreational activities, the doctors, nurses, enlisted men, Red Cross workers and dieticians were daily performing their errand of mercy and military service. Sick and wounded were being brought in regularly. mostly from Morotai, the advance echelon of the New Guinea fighting. Some were brought in by boat, others by plane. After the invasion of the Philippines. most casualties came from those islands. The sights which had chilled the men and women at Bushnell now became ordinary medical and surgical cases which required prompt attention, patient treatment, and sympathetic understanding.

The summer was hot; one day the thermometer registered 140 degrees in the dank humidity. Perspiration flowed profusely, and the tempo of life slowed. Uniforms were scanty. Garrison rules were relaxed with saluting and inspections a rarity. Nevertheless, morale was high and the hospital was functioning perfectly.

Colonel Homer K. Nicoll, who had succeeded to the top post of Commanding Officer upon the transfer of Colonel Spittler in Australia, had remained unruffled by the difficulties of terrain, mud, and lack of engineering facilities in Finschhafen. He had been an omnipresent figure throughout the erection of the hospital. But the ways of the army are unknown to the directing powers themselves, and Colonel Nicoll received orders to assume new duties as executive officer of the 26th Hospital Center in Manila, while Colonel Allam B. Ramsay reported to take over the 13th command on December 28, 1944.











- 53-Natives Lay Air Strip Sidewalk alongside Coral Road

- 53—Natives Lay Air Strip Sidewaik alongside Colai Road
  54—Labor on the Beach
  55—Friendly Neighbors
  56—Number One Boy
  57—Native Cemetery
  58—Fuzzies Leave Hospital Area after Cocoanut Harvest
  59—Leaving Native Village for Big Sing-Sing



Surgical Building

Shortly after his succession as commanding officer base orders went out to restore garrison discipline with its despised saluting and propriety of uniform. A brief time before this new order an unusual dress parade was being held on the road through the hospital grounds when a patient in the Neuropsychiatric ward shouted out "You guys should be in here instead of us." Gradually a semblance of rule book discipline was restored amid occasional grumblings.

Frequent excursions were made into the hospital area by the Fuzzies in search of cocoanuts. The cocoanuts would be shaken from the trees and hulled by the men. The women would then pick up and carry the loads, and the Fuzzies would be back off to their villages. Occasional trips by the members of the hospital were made to native villages but the

heat and tangled vegetation made the journey arduous. The general conclusion was that the sight of a smelly, dirty, fly-infested village was not worth the effort.

The new theatre which had been installed seated 2500 persons. The stage was equipped with footlights, overhead lighting, revolving side screens, and dressing rooms. To the rear of the theatre was the radio and sound room with controls installed for various broadcast programs. The studio was equipped with microphone sets, turntables for recordings, and a radio. Nearly 200 small amplifiers located in every ward, clinic, office, detachment building, and tent carried from the station news broadcasts, musical programs, and even training programs as "Why We Fight".



Orthopedic Ward



Our Beach



Basketball Court



Medical Ward



Medical Supply Building

Probably holding top place in the interest of hospital personnel and patients at Finsch were sports. Baseball, basketball, softball, all shared the spotlight. Teams from neighboring units played their best on fields leveled off by army equipment. Sectional and island champions were crowned.

Animal life was plentiful and some species were readily cultivated as pets. The dental clinic develsped the prize pet—Willie—a bald headed, fine tailed parrot. He learned to yell out "Beer Call." and a few other choice expressions innocently acquired from admiring GI's. As Willie had become a part of the 13th and civilization it became fitting in the minds of his dental associates that a feather trim was appropriate for him. The technician who performed the clipping did not reckon with the laws of nature for it seems that Willie's tail feathers were trimmed a wee bit too short as a result of which his sense of balance was disturbed and he wobbled around with an inebriated stumble. Finally one fine day Willie fell headlong from a perch to which he had ascended. and when the medical aid men recovered him the emergency medical tag which they attached to his leg indicated a long incised chest wound. As part of the 13th, Willie was immediately rushed to surgery where a delicate surgical operation was performed by a top-ranking surgeon, and Willie recovered from the operation and as the tail grew back in length he recovered from the feather trim. Later he was smuggled to Manila where one day he happened upon an open bottle of sedative pills which suited his sense of smell and taste. The sedatives soon disappeared and shortly thereafter Willie also disappeared in a parrot grave after a fitting military service.

Another pet was Chigger, an Australian mongrel, who could be petied by only a chosen few. Having been injured he continued to limp about the base though X-Rays disclosed that his injuries had been completely healed.



Willie the Parrot Gets Lecture from Nurse on Psittacosis

During Thanksgiving and Christmas elaborate holiday meals were served with printed menus to identify the courses. Turkey with the customary trimmings was consumed in the atmosphere of gaily decorated mess halls. During the impressive Christmas ceremonies of 1944 the piercing desire for home was temporarily forgotten. Catholic services inaugurated the spirit with Midnight Mass in the Chapel. During the morning at the Protestant service a Christmas Pageant was performed by members of the unit under the direction of Chaplain Luginbill and Captain Textor, who also acted as organist. The trained 13th choir of male and female voices missed none of the yuletide carols, and throughout the day a Nightingale chorus of nurses paraded through the wards singing carols to the accompaniment of a portable organ pushed along on a GI food cart.



Plaster-of-Paris Snowmen Visit Finsch at Christmas



Yule Decorated Ward



Mess Hall with Wards toward rear

The stay in New Guinea was not all pleasant. During the early weeks dysentery struck viciously. The latrine, known as Rabaul, because of the many trips paid to it, was always crowded, and seas of mud made the numerous trips difficult to traverse. The jungle dampness and torrid heat had their effect upon skins. Innumerable dermatological diseases became prevalent. Calomine lotion and Gentian Violet covered the bodies of many. Emergency airplane flights carried to the States many of those suffering the effects of jungle-rot.

Tragedy in the form of death also made dread visits. Nelle Crout, who had been Chief of Nurses from

the inception of the unit, died in the midst of the inhospitable jungle. She had directed the nursing duties in a firm and kindly manner, and had endeared herself to all those whose position or work brought them in contact with her. Death also came here to Eugene Stinetorf, one of the enlisted men.

A lull in military activity in New Guinea resulted in a slackening of the admission of patients. Suddenly news of the Philippine invasion was broadcast, and soon the full force of the hospital went into action as casualties from Leyte, and later Luzon, were hurried in for treatment.



Enlisted Men's Housing Project

May 8, 1945—rockets and flares lit the skies under the mantle of the Southern Cross as the great news was flashed that the war in Europe had ended. Germany had capitulated. Celebrations were wild. Carbines, rifles, and ack-ack cracked loudly with ammunition flying wildly into the air. Casualties of the victory celebrations were soon being registered on the hospital records, and medical work continued from the effects of peace as well as war.

Thoughts ran to a rapidly disbanding army and home, that most wonderful word in all the world. For many of the younger soldiers a United States without Franklin D. Roosevelt would seem strange. When news arrived in New Guinea that he had died on April 12th, the sorrowing men and women recalled vividly the Sunday morning at Camp Robinson when they stood in ankle-deep Arkansas mud as the Commander-in-Chief in caped overcoat reviewed them from his passing automobile.

On May 30, 1945, Lt. Col. Evan M. Barton, who had weathered the 13th G. H. campaign as Chief of the Laboratory Service, was placed in command upon the assignment of Colonel Ramsay to the 120th General Hospital. It was Colonel Barton's good fortune to guide and direct the hospital through its final

peace-time moves, and then to witness the demobilization of this grand hospital group.

The New Guinea job was about finished. Fighting had moved to the West of that great base, and it was no surprise when the rumor gathered momentum that a move was impending. Preparations for the movement were routine. Buildings were dismantled and wrecked carefully for re-use of the lumber which was marked, inventoried, and stacked for removal, only then to be abandoned since the ships carrying the personnel had no room for dead timber.

On June 6, 1945, the New Guinea skies opened with a heavy downpour of farewell rain as the 13th bade a last adieu to the region. Hallowed memories of the trying early days spent here mingled with expectations of what was to come. The men left on the James O'Hara, an APA, and quietly watched the fading coast of New Guinea and Hollandia vanish into the horizon. The ship was one of a convoy of sixteen heading for the Philippine Islands where the 13th would be re-established. The nurses again were sent on detached duty to the 4th General Hospital and the 119th Station Hospital, after which they proceeded to the Philippines, mostly by plane, a few by boat.



Completed Hospital at Finschhafen Dedicated to the Men and Women of the 13th General Hospital

# COMMANDING OFFICER



COL. EVAN M. BARTON

Assumed Command in New Guinea

### MANILA, PEARL OF THE ORIENT

The beautiful City of Manila was one of the first conquests of the Japs. From the rail of the James O'Hara the city seemed nearly intact. The harbor was sprinkled with sunken vessels and giant spars poked their heads from the water. Harbor traffic was heavy as ships dodged around the partly submerged wrecks. Several days passed before the men disembarked on June 17th, and climbed into transport trucks waiting at the dock. The wreckage of Manila immediately became more evident. Shattered houses, gaping walls, and scattered debris were mute reminders of the fierce air bombings, naval shelling, and close-up combat fighting. Rubble filled much of the streets.

After two hours of aimless cruising while the truck drivers sought to ascertain their bearing after missing a street azimuth somewhere, the convoy lurched to a stop at the Wack Wack Club, a swank country club which shortly before was entertaining the Jap General, Yamashita, and the heavy brass of his official staff. Large tents studded the golf course. The area was teeming with women and children offering for sale bananas and pineapples. Philippine women balanced heavy, loaded trays on their heads. Cries of "Veectry, Joe, buy cheep" filled the air.

There was little trouble getting this place in livable condition. Within two days electric lights were in all tents. Barber shop, Post Exchange, Chapel, head quarters, supply, and motor pool tents had been erected. Here at last was army living for the enlisted men. Each tent had its particular Filipino boy to make the beds, sweep, clean, and tidy up the interior and exterior. Filipino girls would come daily to take away soiled clothes and return them washed and ironed. Yes, army life was at last getting tolerable.



Chapel at Manila



73 to 79-War Ruins in Manila



Manila Water Front

Medical officers were assigned to their professional duties at the hospital center. The nurses, who had been given quarters at Clarke Field, did temporary duty at the 248th General Hospital. Enlisted men were given work at the medical depots, and then details began working on one of Manila's first prefabricated air conditioned hospitals.

On August 14th the apathy resulting from uncertain waiting was suddenly broken as the report was hysterically shouted from one to another that the Japs had surrendered. At last the war was over, and all plans, tentative or otherwise, went up in smoke. The celebration in the jungle which had marked the fall of the Third Reich was minor compared to that which greeted the Nipponese surrender. Men avariciously started counting their points with home appearing closer and closer.

As work slackened following the peace, men and women found more time to visit Manila and its environs. Diversification was plentiful. Such places as "Cafe Society", "Japs Surrender Bar", and others opened their doors wide now that there was no further fear by the native population of a Jap return. Tours were made to Santo Tomas, Bilibid prison, the Walled City, Bataan, Corregidor, and other famous places. A few weddings of members of the nursing corps took place followed by delightful receptions at the Officers' Club. To liberate and prove their frustrated skills, the army cooks baked huge tiered wedding cakes which helped the solemnity and grandeur of the nuptial festivities. In true military fashion the brides resorted to swords for slicing the cakes.



Cattle Car to San Fernando



248th G. H .- Manila Medical Center

A few days before October 1st, men with 70 points or more were transferred to the 37th Division which was heading for home. Although the breaking up of an outfit is always a sad occasion, few were sorry to see their pals leave for it was but a foreshadowing of their own return.

On October 1, 1945, the entire personnel of the 13th departed for Cava, La Union. There preparations

were made for a forthcoming voyage to Japan. Rumor was that the 13th would be deactivated; another rumor was that the 13th would serve as a hospital for the occupation troops. When everybody, this time including the nurses, boarded the U.S.S. Dauphin, nobody knew for sure what lay ahead. The ship left the Philippines October 22nd and arrived in the harbor of Sasebo, Japan, on October 27th. The trip was uneventful.

### LAND OF CHERRY BLOSSOMS

Four months before, hostile gunfire would have greeted the new arrivals. Now Japanese peacefully moved about on the shore. The harbor was crowded with ships. Almost upon anchoring the desired news arrived that the hospital would be deactivated. With

new spirit the men labored for eight days unloading the hospital cargo after which the entire personnel boarded trains for Kokura. Here the Tamaya department store had been requisitioned and was being converted into a hospital. The members of the 13th



- 81-Fukuoka Streamline Transportation
- 82-Kokura Maxwell Street
- 83-Mount Fujiyama
- 84-Jap Mother and Child

gave this hospital a start until the 307th General Hospital moved in to take over the facilities. This unit became enamoured of the number 13 and soon thereafter with proper permissions having passed through channels, the 307th G. H. became officially on February 10, 1946, the 13th G. H. This new-look 13th G. H. functioned in Japan until December, 1946, when it was inactivated.

There being nothing to do now, the members of the original 13th became sightseers and tourists. Shinto Shrines and Geisha Houses were visited. Samurai swords, Jap pistols, silk kimonas, pearls, china, and lacquered bric-a-brac were eagerly purchased as souvenirs. Japanese beer made from rice

was bought in quart bottles. On shopping tours the nurses were objects of curiosity for the Nips who would never fail to stop and stare curiously at the painted fingernails which they had never before seen.

Gradually the point score sank—68, 67, 63. By December 5, 1945, all the hospital members with more than 63 points had left the Separation Center near Nagoya. The others soon followed. Homeward trips were made by plane and boat. The landings took place at varying ports on the West Coast and then came the overland trip to separation centers nearest HOME—HOME SWEET HOME.



Best Welcome Ever

### **FINIS**

This short account of a great hospital unit in a great war must necessarily have omitted some things which some member may think was most startling or important, but in Minnesota, in Texas, in Illinois, in Vermont, in California, in every state of the union, it will help bring back fond memories of the places, incidents, and people who made the 13th General Hospital an outstanding organization. The clearing in New Guinea where the 13th G. H. operated may now be covered with the flora and fauna of the jungle, the other encampments may have changed their character, but the 13th General Hospital will live on in the hearts of those who at some time or other were a breathing part of it.

# Personnel

#### OF THE

#### 13th GENERAL HOSPITAL

#### (Assembled from available rosters)

♣ Indicates deceased

BAAR, WILLIAM D.

ACEVEDO, CAFERINO ACUNA, LAURO S. ADDISON, ROBERT G. ADEL, MAURICE ADEN, IRENE B. AFFRUNTI, SALVATORE AHOLA, VANER A. AIRITAM, HERBERT ALDERETE, LOUIS E. AKERBLOM, EMIL ALAMSHAH, ROBERT C. ALBINO, WILLIAM A. ALCOTT, DAN ALEXANDER, RALPH H.
ALEXOVICH, ANDREW, JR. ALFORD, RALPH I. ALISHAHON, WILLIAM ALLFREE, MARY BLANCHE ALLEN, CHARLES ALLEN, GLEN ALLISON, CLIFFORD ALTMIX, RITA (OLSON) AMNER, CHARLES E. AMUNDSON, IVA ANDERSON, FRED L. ANDERSON, JAMES T. ANDERSON, LILA ANDRESON, LILA ANDRESEN, ROSEMARY ANDREWS, CARROLL W. ANGE, LUTHER M. ANGELL, EDGAR C. ANGELO, OTTO M. ANGELONE, FRANK ARCH, WILLIAM M.

ASPEL, IOSEPH M.

BADILLA, RALPH BAILEY, WARD BARRIER, RAY
BARROW, STEPHEN J.
BARRUS, JAMES E. BARTLETT, A. W., JR.
BARTON, EVAN M.
BARTZ, MELVIN E.
BARUTZKE, GERHARDT A.
BASS, ROY E.
BASSETT, LEROY E.
BATES, FRINCEY BARTEL, JOHN H. BARTLETT, A. W., JR. BATES, ERNEST L. BATTAGLIA, CHARLES P. BAUM, HUGO C. BEAHM, THOMAS H.

BEAT, JAY R.

BOBIS, JOHN E.

BODFISH, JOHN H. ARCH, WILLIAM M.

ARNOLD, FELIX E.

ARONLD, ROBERT C.

BEAVERS, MAX D.

BECK, HAROLD V.

BECK, HAROLD V.

BECK, HELEN I.

ARONSON, EDMOND A.

BECK, HELEN I.

ATKINSON, CHARLES L.

BECKERMAN, HARRY

BECKERMAN, VINCENT J.

BECKERMAN, VINCENT J.

BECKMAN, VINCENT

BEHRNDT, HARRISON R. BELGARD, HARVEY BAKER, JAMES M.

BAKER, MIRIAM MARKEN)

BAKER, MIRIAM MARKEN)

BAKER, ROBERT A.

BALES, MILTON

BALLS, MILTON

BALL, THOMAS R.

BALOLIK, FRANK J.

BANDOR, VICTOR

BANJAVIC, EMIL T.

BARCLAY, WILLIAM A.

BARKLEY, HOWARD E.

BARKWELL, FOSTER S.

BARNES, EVEREIT D.

BARNES, KENNETH O.

BARONE, DOMINIC J.

BARRO, DOMINIC J.

BARRO, MIRION M.

BARRIER, RAY

BARROW, STEPHEN

BETTINARDI, JOHN R.

BETTINARDI, JOHN R.

BEVERLY, BERT L, JR.

BEVERS, MAX D.

BEVERS, MAX D.

BEYER, EDWARD H.

BIANCHI, AMERICA W.

BIBBY ALDROW BELLER, LESLIE H. BIELAK, ALVIN J. BINKLEY, PAULINE O. (JACOBSON) BIRGLECHNER, ALFRED J. BISHOP, LORAINE (ARMSTRONG) BITLER, JOHN F. BLAJE, VINCENT V. BLANTON, WILLIAM S. BLAYLOCK, THIRL W. BLAZEK, JOHN V. BLENDER, WILLIAM BLOUNT, HUBERT B. BOLLUM, HELEN A. BONFIGLI, EMILE J. BONG, OTTO C. BOOKER, LEE C. BOPP, LAWRENCE A. BORIS, ALBERT J. BORSKI, DAVID R.

> BOTTOLFSON, HOWARD 1. BOTTS, MABLE M. BOUCHER, MILDRED E. BOUDREAUX, CHARLES A.

DOWER, HOWARD A.

CANNING, CLARENCE
CAPACIT TONY
CARLSON, BERNICE A.
CARLSON, ALVIN
CARLSON, ALVIN
CARLSON, ALVIN
CARLSON, DIN M.
CARLSON, BERNICE A.
CARLSON, BEWNIM
CARLSON, DIN M.
CARLSON, BEWNIM
CARLSON, DIN M.
CARLSON, BEWNIM
CARLSON, IN M.
CARLSON, BEWNIM
CARLSON, IN M.
CARLSON, BEWNIM
COROCAR, HENRY C.
COROCA

DECKER, LILLIAN GOLDIE (STEWART)

DADOMINCIS, HERRY Y.

DERRING, THOMAS N.

DECRING THOMAS N.

DECRING THOMAS N.

DECRING THOMAS N.

DELEGY, SAMINY N.

DEMENS, SAMINY N.

DEMENS, SAMINY N.

DEMENS, HELAR I.

DESTON, DELAKANDER C.

DENSON, DELAKAR R.

DELEGER, HELAR I.

DE SEPTING, ALVIN

DEPTINY, JAMES F.

ELLIS, WILLIAM H.

DEPPING, ALVIN

DEPPING, ALVIN

DEPPING, ALVIN

DEPPING, ALVIN

DEPUTY, HALB B.

DEMENTH, DAVID P.

DESTAND, HELLON, CLAUDE

DEPUTY, HALB S.

DEMENTH, DAVID P.

DESTAND, HARV C.

DENVIN, HALB S.

DECRIF HOWARD C.

DERRING C.

DENVIN, HALB S.

DECRIF HOWARD C.

ENGEL HOWARD C.

DERRING C.

GILMORE, QUINCY M.
GILSTARP, WILLIAM M.
GOLOCK, ROBERT F.
GODWIN, FRED D.
GODWIN, JAMES R.
GOLDE, PHILPS.
GOLDE, PHILPS.
GOLDER, PHILPS.
GOLD

ISBAEL, CARL R.

IABLONKA, LUCIAN

IABLONKA, LUCIAN

IABLONGWSKI, HENRY A.

KAPLOWITZ, RATHAN

IACCUZZO, JAMES V.

KAUPMAN, WILLIAM F.

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IACCUZO, JAMES V.

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IACCOSSON, WARD K.

KELLEY, ROBERT I.

IACKS, MELVEN W.

KELLEY, SOMBRE E.

KELLY, CHARLER I.

IAMBON, CAWBENCE D.

IAMBON, LAWBENCE D.

IAMBON, RAWBON

IAMBON, LAWBENCE D.

IAMBON, RAWBON

IAMBON, LAWBENCE D.

IAMBON, LAWBENCE D.

IAMBON, COLOR, MARCHAILER I.

IAMBON, LAWBENCE D.

LYMAN, WALTER I.

LYONS, TROMAS H.

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MICHELOTI, SROINO

MICHELORI, SROINO

MICHARIER, SALVERO

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RICHER, ROBERT T.

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SCHICK, LAWRENCE M.

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SMITH, LOWR M.

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SMITH, LEAN H.

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SMITH, LEAN T.

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STAPLES, FRANK I
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